

Standard 6-2

The student will demonstrate an understanding of life in ancient classical civilizations and their contribution to the modern world.

- 6.2.3** Summarize the significant political and cultural features of the classical Roman civilization, including its concepts of citizenship, law, and government; its contributions to literature and the arts; and its innovations in architecture and engineering such as roads, arches and keystones, and aqueducts. (H, P)

Taxonomy Level: B 2 Understand/Conceptual Knowledge

Previous/future knowledge:

This is the first time students have been taught about the classical Roman civilization.

In Global Studies, students will summarize the essential characteristics of Roman civilization and explain their major impact today (GS-1.2).

It is essential for students to describe the development and transformation of Roman government from a republic to an empire and the impact of Roman government on modern governments (especially the United States). Early Roman government was republican (representative) in nature. This form of Roman government created offices that represented the interests of various groups, giving those people a voice, directly or indirectly in Roman government. Examples include *tribunes* who represented plebeians (common people), the use of *assemblies* (various assemblies were created for many purposes, including the Senate), and *consuls* (served one year terms as the civil and military authority). Another critical feature of Roman government was the idea of checks and balances. Roman government was structured in a complex way to prevent any one group or body of consolidating too much power. A unique feature of Roman government to offset checks and balances was the ability to elect a dictator to rule Rome with absolute power for a short period of time during emergencies. Finally Roman government was essential in promoting the codification of law that laid the basis for the rule of law. Students should be able to describe the movement of Roman government toward a dictatorship (eventually creating an empire) but also recognize that many of the republican principles remained intact during this time.

In general the Romans did not make significant *original* contributions in art and literature but rather built upon the influences of Greek civilization. Roman sculpture was very life-like and less idealized than Greek forms. Roman mythology, too, was very similar to the Greeks. In architecture and engineering, the Romans greatly advanced previous accomplishments and were often geared toward solving problems associated with everyday life. They were able to modify the traditional post and lintel construction and develop the arch which they utilized to build higher, more stable structures (the most famous example being the Colosseum). The Romans also were the first to seriously incorporate the use of domes in their structures. Roman roads were a significant achievement that allowed the empire to be unified, both for trade and protection. Aqueducts, designed to supply fresh water to cities, are another example of engineering marvels from the Romans. Many aqueducts and roads built by the Romans are still

functional today, a testament to their engineering prowess. The combination of these political and cultural features allowed Rome to enjoy a time of peace, prosperity, and expansion culminating in the *Pax Romana*.

It is not essential for students to know detailed explanation of Roman laws and government procedures, explanation of art techniques and literature, detailed information about Roman leaders, the legend of Romulus and Remus, or information pertaining to the destruction of Pompeii.

Assessment guidelines: This indicator calls for students to be able to **summarize** Roman political and cultural features. As such, students should be able to **identify** and **describe** those features uniquely associated with classical Roman civilization and **compare/contrast** these with similar features of other civilizations – most notably Greece and the modern world. It would be fitting to have students **identify** examples of art or architecture as representative of classical Rome. Assessments should require students to **describe** how Roman government was republican in nature and to give examples of how its structure helped reflect republican principles today. Students should defend the importance of Roman engineering in creating a stable and secure civilization.